



Swedish Genealogy Files: Mystery of the Soldier Lars Holm

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Thirty-five years ago, a letter was received from the military archive in Stockholm stating very little had been found about the soldier Lars Jansson Holm of Västerlövsta parish. This end of line ancestor was well documented in military and parish records with no success. Revisited in 2015, this mystery was solved using an innovative combination of military, parish, and court records. Rather than simply tell the story, we will study this research problem, analyze the evidence, discuss ideas for possible next steps, and then explore the outcome for each possibility.

Problem: Cannot find the birthplace or parents of Lars Jansson Holm born about 1788

- Could be in the Västerlövsta birth and christening records
- Could be in another parish
- Pre-1840 household examination records have not been indexed

Case Study

This case study begins with correspondence between a descendant of Lars Holm and the military archive (Krigsarkivet) in Stockholm in 1985. Although the descendant had diligently searched household records and general muster rolls, the birthplace and parents of Lars Holm were still unknown. A reply from an archivist at Krigsarkivet simply stated “very little information has been found.” Discouraged, the family left the problem alone for 35 years.

I began by verifying what was known about Lars Holm in Västerlövsta parish records. I found the birth of his son Anders in 1821 which identified the parents place of residence as Åhls ägor. Looking at the household examination of 1821 – 1824, we see Lars Holm with his wife Maja and their 3 children at the time. Although the household record shows a birth year for Lars as 1788 it had no column for birthplace.

1. What's the Next Step?

- A. Search every household examination at Åhls ägor going forward in time until Lars dies hoping at some point the household record format would change to include a birthplace column.
- B. Check the marriage of Lars Holm in 1810 to see if a father is mentioned or to see a place of residence at the time.

- C. Follow Lars Holm in household records to the time of marriage in 1810, and further back until he appears with his parents.
- D. Check the move-in records of Västerlövsta to see if it shows Lars Holm came from another parish just before the time of the marriage in 1810.
- E. Look up the birth entries for all 3 children of Lars Holm to see if there is a possible witness (or godparent) from Lars side of the family. Maybe that relative is easier to follow.

At this point, we have seen the soldier Lars Holm on 8 household records, 3 birth records as a father, his death in 1850, and his marriage to Maja Pehrson in 1810. All of these sources list him as the soldier Lars Holm. Next, I decided to see his registration in the general muster rolls. The parish of Västerlövsta provides soldiers for the Västmanlands regemente and Livregementets gredadjärkår. I did a search in Centrala Soldatregistret which happens to have Lars Holm in the database. It shows that he belonged to Västmanlands regemente in Väsby kompani and that his patronymic name was Jansson.

2. What's the Next Step?

- A. Check all available general muster rolls to see what evidence they show about the soldier Lars Jansson Holm.
- B. Contact Krigsarkivet again to see if they have a soldier contract, or recruitment records for the Västmanland regemente in 1809. Maybe these records will tell us where Lars Jansson Holm came from before getting the job, or even his birthplace.
- C. Look for a possible moving -in certificate (HII series) Bilagor till flyttningslängderna for for Lars Jansson Holm which might have been turned in just before 1810 when he married in Västerlövsta.
- D. Browse the birth and christening records of Västerlövsta for the years 1787 – 1790 to identify all baby boys named Lars whose father is a variation on the name Johannes (or any other variant on the name).

The moving certificate establish there is a Lars Jansson who was born in 1789 in Västerlövsta. After searching the birth and christening records, I found there is only 1 baby named Lars whose father is a variation of Johannes. The fathers name was Johan Horrström who was a horseman in the army. Could this be the same Lars on the moving certificate? With the name of a hypothetical father, additional research might prove that Johan Horrström is the father of Lars Jansson Holm.

3. What's the Next Step?

- A. Search the household examination 1784 – 1791 in Västerlövsta to find Johan Horrström and his family in Horrstad.
- B. Follow the baby Lars forward in time in the Västerlövsta household records to hopefully connect with the household record at the time of his marriage in 1810.
- C. Search the estate inventories database on ArkivDigital to see if Simtuna häradsrätt has been included. If not in AD then the Bouppteckningar database on Riksarkivet.
- D. Search for an estate inventory for the horseman (Ryttare) Johan Horrström in the ArkivDigital estate inventories or Riksarkivet Bouppteckningar database for a possible match.

Key Learnings

- 1. Be flexible with the dates in household records. In this case the birth year of Lars was 1789 from birth until he was 17 years old. When he moved back in 1809 the household records show 1788 for the rest of his life.
- 2. Non-patronymic surnames are nice when they match but are not required to indicate relationship within a family.
- 3. When household record strategy breaks down, check the supporting moving-in certificates for possible clues.
- 4. In this case, the Central Soldiers Register included Lars Jansson Holm. The database is not comprehensive for all soldiers and navy sailors.
- 5. In this case, the estate inventories are searchable for Västmanland on ArkivDigital and Riksarkivet. Neither provider has a comprehensive database for the estate inventories of the entire country.